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INDIAN NOTES

SUMMER 1974 • X NO 3



MUSEUM ^{OF}
THE AMERICAN INDIAN

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MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

PAINTED SUN MASK

This carved wooden mask with a painted muslin headdress representing rays, depicts *Xumtaspi*, the Sun. Collected by C.F. Newcombe. Acquired by exchange in 1908.

Kwakiutl
Vancouver, British Columbia

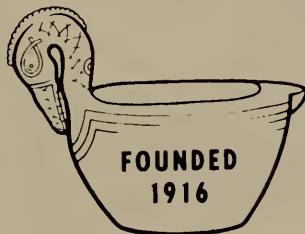
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ca. 1880-1900
30 x 33 inches

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Betty Borger, *Editor*
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Pretty Shield, Medicine Woman of the Crows.
Drawing by Arthur Fleisher from a photograph.

VISION QUESTS OF CROW WOMEN

Peter Nabokov

Research Associate

Peter Nabokov has been a Research Associate of the Museum since 1962, during which time he has published *Two Leggings: The Making of a Crow Warrior* (from an MAI/HF manuscript by William Wildschut) and *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid*. In 1976 T. Y. Crowell will publish his two-volume anthology of Indian/White relations as seen through Indian eyes, entitled *Native Testimony*. Mr. Nabokov is presently preparing *A Crow Miscellany*, consisting of the final papers of William Wildschut, for publication by the Museum of the American Indian. He has done research on the Crow, Penobscot, and Alabama-Koasati Indian reservations. He has edited and re-written the following article based on unpublished manuscripts by Wildschut which had been deposited in the Museum archives.

Introduction

As with her counterpart in most traditional Plains Indian societies, the Crow woman was no stereotypical “squaw” doomed to a life of joyless drudgery. Although she assumed responsibility for domestic tasks, she enjoyed a powerful behind-the-scenes influence in major tribal decisions. And although she generally remained near camp rearing children, collecting firewood, gathering wild fruits, and painting rawhide gear — while her husband hunted or warred — she had quite definite property rights, won custody of children upon divorce, could fight in battle, was allowed sexual indiscretions, and perhaps most significantly, her role in Crow religious life was highly important.

Only a woman could fill the respected position of “tree-notcher” in the Sun Dance. Women could direct Tobacco Society adoption ceremonies. Wives and husbands shared ceremonial activities as an indivisible unit, for example as co-initiates in the Tobacco Society adoption rites and co-inheritors of prized medicine paraphernalia. Women with shamanistic gifts could devote their lives to holy practice, as did Two Moons, who never married but became a famous nineteenth century medicine woman and prophet. Women originated or owned the following important Crow medicine bundles: the Little Nest bundle, the Sees the Tent Ground Sun Dance bundle, the High Rock Medicine Arrow bundle, the Strikes the Hat Skull bundle, and the Red Woman Digging Stick bundle, among others. A woman, Sitting Heifer, was the “pledger” of the last Crow Sun Dance held in the traditional manner, before the ceremony fell under government ban. And women also shared with men that medium for mystical experience which was at the heart of Crow sacred activity: the vision quest.

For Crow men, social pressure to secure a vision — and with it a personal guardian spirit — was relentless. When they failed to beckon a vision through repeated, arduous fasting and self-mortification at special wilder-

ness fasting sites, men were allowed the somewhat second-rate avenue of purchasing supernatural power from a fellow tribesman. To be a Crow generally meant to be a warrior and hunter, and success there necessitated this spiritual assistance. Crow women, on the other hand, were not confronted with this universal pressure to have visions and spiritual helpers in order to fulfill their identity. Though they sought visions with greater frequency than has been described in literature on the tribe, the impetus to fast was generally felt by women in special straits, usually after some personal misfortune which had caused severe emotional distress.

William Wildschut, who from the autumn of 1918 to June, 1929, specialized in collecting Crow medicine bundles and religious ethnography for the Museum of the American Indian, did not devote much attention to the woman's role in nineteenth century Crow society. Most of our knowledge of traditional Crow life comes from the writings of anthropologist Robert H. Lowie, and from the only autobiography of a Crow woman, Frank Bird Linderman's popular life of Pretty Shield, published in 1932 as *Red Mother*. However, Wildschut did pay some special attention to the vision quest aspect of women's spiritual activities. Among the unpublished papers which Wildschut envisioned as his magnum opus on the Crow — from which Dr. John C. Ewers edited the volumes on *Crow Indian Beadwork* [1959] and *Crow Indian Medicine Bundles* [1960] — he grouped six interesting accounts of women's fasts.

Since the vision quest is so closely linked with warfare, its examination has been principally limited to men. Even Lowie, in his monograph *Religion of the Crow*, provides but one female vision account, that of Muskrat, commenting merely that it "derives interest from the fact that it represents the religious experiences of a woman." Not only did Crow women seek spiritual succor and guidance through ritual fasting and self-torture more commonly than has been supposed, but vision-fasting was also practiced by women of other Northern Plains peoples as well.

Gros Ventre women, for example, not infrequently joined war parties, became renowned medicine women and curers, and sought spiritual power through fasting. A. L. Kroeber writes that the occasion for such an experience, however, did differ from men: "They appear not to have gone into the mountains with the intention of acquiring supernatural power, but to have received guardian spirits when they were away from camp, mourning." [1907]

Among the Mandans — where women held special rights in the various Holy Women medicine bundles — a man's sister was encouraged to fast while he was carrying out a war venture. Although Mandan women were not urged to seek visions with the same frequency as men, most fasted at

least once during their lives. Their fasts were usually of shorter duration — a day and a night, and not at the men's fasting sites. Stays Yellow, a Mandan woman, received her doctoring gifts during a period when she "fasted in the woods in quest of a god," according to her daughter. And other plains tribes, such as the Blackfoot, Arapaho, and Assiniboine, were exceedingly proud of medicine women who had become diviners, herbalists, diagnosticians, and curers through powers received in dreams.

Grief over the death of a husband, brother, or child would usually signal a Crow woman to seek solace in the wilderness. Her mourning could include self-torture, cutting of a finger, and imploring for a sacred helper to lend emotional support and direction to her life. Desertion by a husband was another reason for fasting; the abandoned woman would pray for a medicine to help her support herself. Women's fasts not only began with a different motivation, they often had a different result: Coming Daylight, a Gros Ventre woman, received a dream which gave her a contraceptive medicine power. And in her vision, Muskrat received the power to reunite straying husbands with their wives.

Throughout her life story, the Crow woman Pretty Shield told Frank Bird Linderman of women's visionary experiences and animal guardian helpers. Her own grandmother, Seven Stars, had been a medicine woman who shared with the most famous Crow chief, Plenty Coups, the medicine of the chickadee. Pretty Shield also tells of Little Face, who saved her band from surprise attack by Sioux through early alert from a female mouse who appeared in her dream.

Pretty Shield relates the tale of Feather Woman, a Sioux captive adopted by the Crows, for whom the mountain lion became a sacred helper. Her version of the familiar Crow "Lost Boy" legend tells of how Lost Child was befriended by dwarf people in present-day Pryor Gap, but it opens with a Crow mother and daughter escaping from their Sioux captors and being aided by a supernatural white bear. And Pretty Shield herself, following the death of her baby girl, mourned in the hills for two months hoping for a medicine dream "that would help me to live and to help others." Finally she was rewarded with the medicine of the ants, "busy, powerful little people," as she affectionately called them. The ant-people gave her name-bestowing power, helping her name all her children and grandchildren. All her life she heeded their advice and could eavesdrop on their conversations.

As Wildschut noted, women rarely sought visions before the age of thirty — the story of young Pretty Louse is an exception. It was also Wildschut's understanding that a woman had to be of sufficient maturity to carry out the arduous fast itself and steadfastly follow her dream's

taboos and dictates.

Of the following women's fast accounts collected by Wildschut, the first five were related by Mrs. The Trail, a 75-year-old Crow woman who had been a government historian for two years and was Wildschut's principal female informant in religious matters.

The sixth story was told in the first person by Cold Wind but actually describes the fast undertaken by his late wife, Magpie on Earth. Shortly after the death of her first husband, Magpie on Earth was traveling between Pryor and Big Horn, mourning his death. In this country she received a vision of ghosts, who surrounded her and taught her how to prepare the herbs with which to doctor the sick.

Then Magpie on Earth had a second vision which Cold Wind relates here in her stead. Interestingly, this second dream caused some disagreement between them. Magpie on Earth, who became a noted herbalist, wanted to transfer the second dream to her husband, for she believed its ceremony would be better carried out by a man. Cold Wind refused, apparently feeling that his status as pipeholder and second ranking chief could not admit spiritual support from a woman. When he told Magpie on Earth that he was a more powerful medicine person than she, she disagreed and claimed that her medicine was more powerful than a man's. As Cold Wind told Wildschut about their argument, "I thought she was foolish, being a woman, for making such a statement. However, she certainly had remarkable powers and many times correctly foretold certain events." Cold Wind went on to say that the evening star frequently guided his wife. Once, when she and her little daughter were lost, it appeared before them as a ball of fire and lit the way to safety. But when the child grew afraid and asked the star to go, it disappeared.

The following vision quest accounts are representative of the range of motivation, complexity, and outcome of this major Crow spiritual outlet as it was available to women.

1. LIMPING

Boils His Leggings was married to a woman named Limping. They had two children. The woman had an uncontrollable temper and constantly nagged her husband. Finally, Boils His Leggings could stand it no longer. Leaving his tipi, he walked around camp and made this announcement:

"All you male creatures of this earth, you are married to this woman."

He told his friends and relatives that he would never return to her. Limping's male relatives brought him many horses and offered different presents to persuade him to return to her. But Boils His Leggings told

them that her temper was uncontrollable. Finally he stopped them by buying himself another wife, named Waters Goes on the Other Side.

She was a widow who had been courted by many single men but listened to none of them. When she agreed to marry Boils His Leggings, his former wife saw that he was not going to return to her. She decided to fast on a mountain.

At that time the Crows were camped near Black Pinnacle, a shaly rock just north of the Musselshell River. Limping decided to fast there. She



Crow woman on horseback. (Photo: Fred R. Meyer, 1903-10)

prepared a sweat bath and cleansed herself thoroughly, being careful that not even a speck of dirt remained under her finger- and toenails. She purified her body over a smudge of pine needles and then rubbed herself all over with sweet sagebrush. These preparations over, she climbed up to her chosen fasting site.

At the top she built a resting place facing east. She piled up flat rocks and covered them with small pine branches. Over this bed she spread a newly tanned buffalo robe, rubbed on the flesh side with white clay to symbolize purity. She rested and fasted for four days and four nights. On the fifth day, camp was ready to move. Some of her relatives were afraid she might be too weak to follow and came looking for her.

Arriving near the butte's crest, they saw Limping preparing to return. They asked if she had been successful. She said her former husband would come back to her. He would be her servant and obey her completely. For her medicine she had received a horned toad, which she kept under her headrest. She never told anyone what she had seen in her vision.

The following spring, the people noticed that Boils His Leggings sometimes visited her again. When his second wife heard about it, she grew jealous, and she finally left him. Then Boils His Leggings paid visits to both his first and second wives.

Limping did everything she could to encourage him to return to her. Finally he gave in and married her again. Now Limping was a changed woman, neither quick-tempered nor nagging. She remained his wife until she died.

2. PRETTY LOUSE

Pretty Louse was very fond of her brother Buffalo Bull. When he was killed by the enemy, she was so grief-stricken that she decided to fast. In a sweat bath she cleansed herself. Then she purified her body with incense from a pine needle smudge. She went into the mountains for many days, until her relatives brought her back.

In camp she only accepted a few mouthfuls of food and four drinks of water. Then she told her people she was going out to fast again.

She took her knife and, after praying to the Great Above Person, slashed her arms and legs. For two moons she fasted. She would not listen when her friends and relatives begged her to stop these hardships. She took only enough food and water to stay alive.

When camp moved, she walked behind at a distance. When it stopped for the night, she sought a ridge or butte to continue fasting. All during this time she had led her brother's favorite white horse. As a sign of

mourning she cut its foretop, mane, and tail. But she never rode. She became thin and weak.

When she had begun this fast, the Crows were camped on Pryor Creek, near the place where it flowed into the Yellowstone River. The camp had moved slowly toward the mountains, through Pryor Gap, and into northwestern Wyoming. Here the Crows stopped on a level place at the foot of the mountains. It was a good place for tanning robes and cutting needed tipi poles.

Pretty Louse knew camp would stay here for a while. She turned her brother's horse in with the camp herd and climbed one of the highest mountains to resume fasting. Sitting down and resting her head against a rock, she cried, wailed, mourned the loss of her brother, and prayed for a vision.

Around midday she heard footsteps coming near. She did not move or try to see who was coming. She heard a voice, and looked up to see a little girl standing before her. The girl said: "Sister, come to my tipi with me. Come now."

Pretty Louse stood up and followed the little girl. They came to a smooth rock wall with a crack up and down it. When the girl touched the crack, the rock opened like a door. The girl walked in and called for Pretty Louse to follow. She found herself inside a tipi. She was asked to sit. Looking around, she saw a woman on her left sewing with awl and sinew. Opposite her sat the woman's husband busily making arrow shafts. They were dwarf people.

The little girl played around, and once in a while she would come to talk with Pretty Louse. The man and woman did not speak or seem to notice her. Pretty Louse was becoming anxious. Then the woman spoke to her husband: "Our child has come with someone. You should give her a medicine."

Putting down his arrows, the man brushed the bits from his lap and went toward the door. The little girl touched Pretty Louse and said, "Follow my father. He will sing four songs. Do not go away until he is finished."

She followed the dwarf man closely. At the door he stopped and sang this song: "Go to that flat. Here is his hair. Look at it."

He moved outside, walked a little distance, and sang another song: "I mean that good one, among them." He walked a little farther and sang a third song: "Go yourself. Go yourself. Go to the camp that moves."

Climbing on a high rock, he held his right hand stretched out before him and sang his fourth song: "My brother, I thank you." Then he spread his fingers to show the number five. "There are these many days of joy."

This meant that Pretty Louse would be revenged five times for her brother's death.

When he had finished this last song, Pretty Louse noticed that his wife had come out. The wife made a gesture with her hand as if throwing something away. She said four times: "Now they chased him."

Overjoyed, Pretty Louse went back to camp. On her way she rested on a ridge and saw someone from the village. She called to him, telling him not to come too close, and asked that Iron Bull, the camp's chief, come by himself.

When Iron Bull appeared, she also told him not to come too near, and then she gave these instructions:

"Assemble the young men who hold our beliefs most sacred. Have each one cut a willow branch, bring some stones, and gather these together at the top of the camp. Ask them to make seven sweat baths, clearing the ground of sod and covering it with powdered charcoal where the sweat baths will be built. Tell the woman named Cooked Meat to blacken her face with charcoal, tie her hair in a knot on the top of her head, and help clear the ground of sod. Tell the men to build all the sweat baths in a row, with the openings facing the sun. Have a smudge built in each one of the sweat baths, although only the seventh sweat bath will be used for the ceremony."



Medicine sweat tipi, ca. 1927. CROW, Montana. (Photo: William Wildschut)

Iron Bull returned and saw that her instructions were carried out. When the sweat baths were ready, a messenger went to get Pretty Louse. When she appeared, she was given something to eat and drink. All the leading men entered the ceremonial sweat bath. Pretty Louse stayed outside and prayed.

The next day, camp moved downriver. Three young men left to hunt deer. They killed a buffalo instead. While skinning it, they were attacked by Sioux. Two were killed. A Crow party went after the Sioux and found their main camp not far away. It was much larger than their own village.

Knowing an attack was going to come, the Crows barricaded their camp with the freshly cut tipi poles. Pretty Louse climbed a high ridge. When she saw the enemy advancing, she began singing the medicine songs the dwarf had taught her, following with her hands the gestures he had made.

Although the Sioux were stronger, they were badly defeated. Many of their warriors were killed, yet no Crows were hurt. The scalps taken during the battle were given to Pretty Louse. She painted herself with charcoal and painted the joints of her brother's horse black. She made a bridle and neck ornament for the horse and fringed them with fresh scalp locks. She made herself a coup stick and fringed it with scalp locks.

Pretty Louse's medicine was the dwarf people. Once a man asked her for a medicine to take into battle. She gave him a stick with a buckskin strip tied to it. The buckskin represented the string for tying on the scalp of an enemy. Pretty Louse became a well-known medicine woman, and often made successful medicine for young warriors.

3. *YOUNG BUFFALO BULL*

The Crows were camped at Plum Creek. Some children were playing on a rocky knoll, pushing rocks over the ledge and watching them roll to the bottom. One large rock was hard to dislodge. Some children scraped the dirt from under it and others pushed and jumped on it. Suddenly the rock gave way and struck Young Buffalo Bull's child on the head, breaking his skull. The children told Young Buffalo Bull what had happened. Immediately she brought the injured boy to camp. A Gros Ventre doctor tried to cure him, but it was no use, and the child died shortly afterward.

Young Buffalo Bull was so unhappy that she decided to kill herself. Her relatives prevented this, and for several days they watched her closely. Her friends told her she was still young and could have other children. Finally she told them that she had been out of her mind for a while. She would not kill herself, but would go on a fast.

First she tortured herself, slashing her arms and legs, stabbing herself in

the head, and cutting off her hair and the end of a finger. Then she began fasting.

Her child had been killed in the spring. She fasted all summer. In the fall, the camp tried to persuade her to come home. She was as thin as a skeleton and her lips were cracked. She usually followed camp at a distance, while her husband or a relative brought her food. She only drank or ate enough to stay alive. Her daughter cried for her return. Once in a while she would spend the night in camp, but she always went away again the next morning.

The Crows were moving along the Musselshell, and finally they stopped near the Crazy Mountains. Young Buffalo Bull climbed one of the highest peaks. She fasted there for four days until a vision came.

She saw a woman who told her which plants and herbs to use for certain ailments. She was given a cure for every disease. The woman said this was in exchange for her many sufferings. She was given the instruction never to allow a man to smoke in her presence or in her tipi, and never to smoke herself.

Young Buffalo Bull returned to camp. She was so used to sleeping outside, however, that she could not rest in her tipi. During her wanderings she had often dreamed of a deer that came to her making certain noises. She had hoped it would also give her a vision, but nothing happened. Whenever she could not sleep she would make a smudge and lie down again. Still, sleep would not come to her. She told her people: "You are glad that I have returned. But I am going out to fast again."

Camp had moved, but she found a nearby ridge and began fasting. The first night she slept peacefully. The second night she had another vision of the deer.

This time it stood over her, its feet on either side of her body and facing east. It lifted its right front hoof toward the sun and sang a song. The deer sang toward the north, south, and west also. Then it spoke to Young Buffalo Bull: "You must go home now and stay there. These places away from camp are not good for human beings. This is where creatures of the world roam about. You will be given another child just like the one you lost. But fast no more."

Young Buffalo Bull returned home, and later on she bore another child. He grew up to look just like the one she had lost. He became one of the best-looking men of the tribe. His mother was known as a skilled doctor. She was visited again in her sleep by the vision of the deer. This time it gave her a wristlet of deerskin with two pair of deer claws attached to it. The deer took a piece of bone from its body and made two dice like those used in playing the hand game.

The wristlet was for her to lend to young men going on the warpath. It was often used successfully. This song belonged to it: "That man is coming. I am the first to count coup on him." The dice gave her the power to play the hand game successfully.



Crow women gambling. The woman standing at right is Crooked Face, wife of Moccasin Top. (Photo: William Wildschut, 1927)

4. THE TRAIL

When one of my children died, I was so unhappy that I tortured myself by slashing my legs and arms. I went with my husband, Mountain, and our friend Old Man Bull Snake to the Big Horn Mountains. I refused to ride and walked all the way into the mountains. I chose a fasting place we call the "big old camping ground," which the White people call the "medicine wheel."

When I got to the top, a strong wind nearly blew me over the cliff. Close to the medicine wheel is a small cave. I saw a black object disappear into it. Suddenly a flash of lightning came out of the cave. I was frightened and began running away, but a second flash followed the first. It nearly hit me, and I fell and was sick. I thought I was going to die, and I went to my husband. He told me to choose another resting place. But I would not listen and went back. Standing near the cave opening, I looked inside and saw only an empty round space and bare ground.

For several days I fasted close to the medicine wheel but received no vision.



Cloth dress painted red, decorated with medicine packets. The dress was used by the leader of the Otter Chapter of the Tobacco Society. (14/6466) Length, 48 inches. CROW, Montana.



Painted doll, part of a Sun Dance bundle. (11/6466) Height, 14 inches. CROW, Montana.



Healing bundle, used only for women, consisting of a parfleche case containing a bundle composed of three cloth wrappers, within which are a duck skin and a carved board. (11/6485) Length of stick, 16 inches. CROW, Montana.

5. OTTER COMING OUT and KILLS AT DAWN

Otter Coming Out became a widow. She kept her husband's shield. It was painted yellow and had a chicken hawk's tail tied to the center. She never mourned or fasted, but she kept that shield.

Finally she dreamed about the shield and received the power to join in the Bear Song Dance. During that ceremony, yellow paint and a chicken hawk's tail would come out of her mouth and disappear back in again.

Kills at Dawn, wife of Crane Feather, lost her brother named Bear Refuses to Give. He was killed by enemies after a successful war party and horse-stealing raid.

Kills at Dawn inherited her brother's coupstick. She took it with her while she fasted and mourned his death. In her vision, the coupstick appeared to her and so became her medicine. Through it she became a successful doctor. She also acquired the power to dance in the Bear Song Dance, when feathers would come out of her mouth.



Parts of a medicine bundle used to cure female sterility, consisting of a miniature baby carrier, scalp lock, and braid of sweet grass. (12/3114) Length of carrier, 8¾ inches. CROW, Montana.

6. MAGPIE ON EARTH

Shortly after I was visited by the ghosts and received a doctoring medicine from them, I went out to fast, still mourning the death of my first husband. For three days and nights I fasted, and toward the last morning I had a vision.

The evening star came toward me in human form. It was wrapped in a red blanket, and its face was painted with red parallel lines. It told me that I would marry again. This time it would be a young man of the tribe. It described him to me and I recognized Cold Wind.

The evening star disappeared. I heard a voice speaking to me from the sky: "You are called over there."

I looked up and saw a chickadee flying overhead. It repeated those words. I stood up and followed the bird. I came to a place where four men wearing white robes were building four small sweat baths some distance apart. They were jack rabbits, the servants of the morning star. I was told to build four similar sweat baths. In each I was to place some charcoal, dig a little pit, build a small fire, and make a smudge.

"If you do this," I was told, "and you desire something, it will come to you easily."

I built the first sweat bath. As I was ready to place the smudge on the little fire I had built inside, the first man told me to say the following when I was ready to do this act of sacrifice: "If I make this smudge and there are no living insects or anything else living in or about this sweat bath, have another child."

[Each of the jack rabbits made this comment at the end of his instructions. It meant that if no living thing was near the sweat bath, Magpie on Earth was to stop the ceremony. The jack rabbits were the evening star's servants. It spoke through them. "Have another child" meant that if the jack rabbits were not satisfied with the person they were to adopt and truly serve, Magpie on Earth should withdraw and let them adopt someone else.]

I repeated these words. I was about to lay a pinch of sweet grass on the little fire when I noticed an ant crawling within the structure. I said, "Thank you." I made the smudge.

I built the second sweat bath and repeated the words as I prepared the smudge. Inside this one I found a frog, and said "thank you" again.

At the third sweat bath I found a snake coiled in front of the entrance.

Just as I was about to make the smudge at the fourth one, streaks of lightning came from the little tipi. Drops of rain fell, although the sky was perfectly clear. No drop touched me.

After a while, a big rainstorm came. It nearly flooded the village I had come from, but no rain struck me.

Today's emphasis on clarification of women's roles, past, present, and future, can only be enhanced by fresh analysis of the traditional interaction of Indian women with each other and their societies. Often this fresh look will require new interpretations of old anthropological monographs. But upon lucky occasion, as with William Wildschut's contribution, newly uncovered material can help point the direction to this fuller understanding of the many dimensions of Indian women's experience.

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Editor's note: Yes, this issue of *Indian Notes* is very late. The Annual Report, which was to have been the summer issue, has been indefinitely postponed; also, *Notes* has a new editor. We have gone ahead with the material originally scheduled for fall, and soon will be back on schedule.

— Betty Borger

COLD WEATHER CLOTHING

A special exhibit of *Cold Weather Clothing* opened at the Museum on December 20 and will be on view through March 2, 1975. The twenty-five items of clothing selected from the Museum collections at the Research Annex, demonstrate how some American Indians dealt with low temperatures.

The exhibit illustrates a number of interesting and distinctive regional solutions that developed. Eskimos, for example, inventively used skins and furs to keep warm, whereas North American Plains Indians relied on the use of buffalo hides and painting their bodies with bear grease for insulation against the cold. The Indians of Central America adapted their basic weaving techniques to the making of heavier woven textiles, adding feathers for extra warmth. In the Andes there was considerable adaptation of clothing, but coca chewing also was used — and is still used today — to numb the senses against the pain of cold weather. The Ona Indians of Tierra del Fuego dealt with the weather by adapting their body temperatures to the cold.

Eskimos are famous for their ingenuity in designing for practical purposes. A man's inner coat of caribou skin enabled its wearer to survive temperatures far below zero by providing insulation in a way that is similar to a Thermopane window. The inner layer is worn with the fur on the inside next to the body, while the outer layer is worn with the fur turned outward, thus catching a layer of air between the inner and outer layers of clothing. The same principle — a major one in Eskimo technology — is illustrated by a pair of grass inner boots and a pair of sealskin moccasins made to be worn over fur boots.

Indians made use of a wide variety of animals and birds — such as bear, caribou, guanaco, eider duck, badger, and ostrich — for the natural warmth provided by the fur and plumage of these creatures.

In some areas, such as the Eastern Woodlands, the Indians overcame cold weather simply by adding more layers of clothing; therefore no single article in itself could be considered a "cold weather garment." The one exception in the east is the winter moccasin, which is heavier and larger in order to accommodate insulating material such as moss or feathers. The flaps of winter moccasins are higher than those of summer moccasins, and are tied around the leg.

The exhibit was organized by Susan Krause-Martin, Curator of Exhibits. She presented gallery talks about *Cold Weather Clothing* during January.

MEXICAN MASKS

A special exhibition of Mexican Masks, drawn primarily from the collection of 120 wooden masks deposited on loan from Vivian S. Merrin and Samuel H. Lindenbaum, opened at the Museum on October 9 and continues through January 31, 1975. The emphasis is on masks made from 1850 to 1950, with a few examples from the Museum's earlier collections to provide an archeological balance.

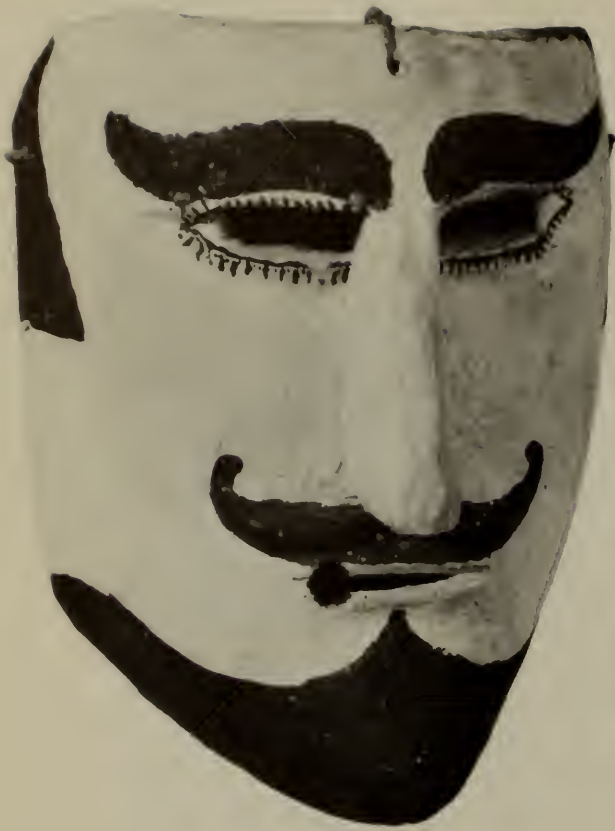
Masks have been used throughout the Americas from the most ancient times to the present, with varied purposes. Some suggest an attempt to relate human forces to supernatural ones; others were an effort to counteract evil forces, control natural elements, or appease the spirits of animals killed for food. Still other needs were a magico-religious desire to assure future food supplies, or an avenue of prayer to obtain the goodwill of the gods. Such human pleasures as humor and entertainment were to be found in masked performances involving satire, burlesque, or clowning. Human representations often portray historical events or individuals. In short, almost any social, political, or religious activity may be observed with masks.

To us, some designs are more esthetically satisfying than others; to the Indian, this aspect seems less important than the inclusion of specific design elements. An effective mask design will arouse a viewer, whether initiated to its specific meaning or not, to certain emotional reactions, and this very quality is a major test of a good artist — if the creation of the carver results in a powerful emotional response, then the mask can usually be regarded as successful. Many designs originated as face painting.

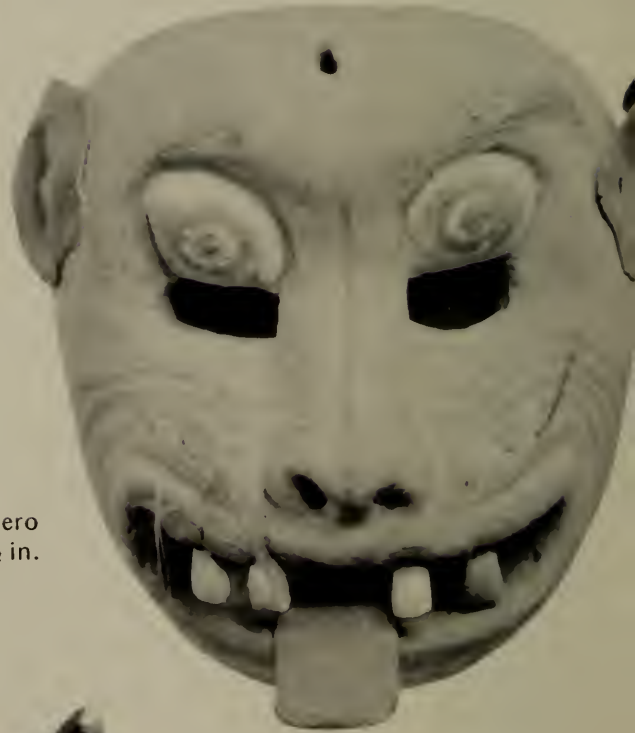
Masks are known to have existed as early as the Olmec civilization, dating from about 1250 B.C. and continuing in strength through the Tlatilco and Chupícuaro horizons. This suggests that they have long been a part of Native American custom. Evidences of variety in form and design are offered by the clay and shell creations from western Mexico — rare survivals in view of their fragility. Perhaps the most precious are the



Matachín mask, *Mayo*, Sonora
11/1331 9 x 16 in.



Marqués mask, Guerrero
18/9507 6 x 7 in.



Jaguar mask, Guerrero
24/9141 8½ x 9½ in.

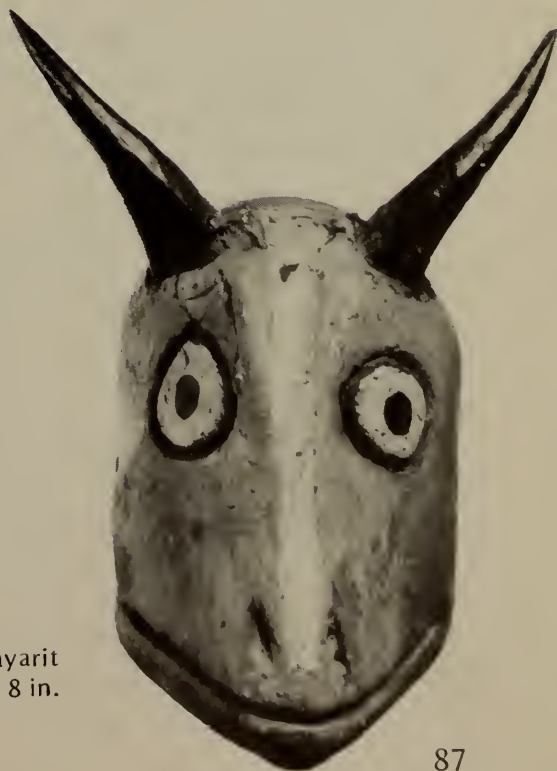


Diablo mask, Guerrero
24/9183 8½ x 10¼ in.

Santiago mask, Michoacán
24/9177 5½ x 7½ in.



Cristo mask, Chiapas? 24/9191
14 x 19½ in.



Deer mask, Nayarit
24/9126 3¾ x 8 in.

wooden masks inlaid with turquoise from Puebla and Oaxaca, by Mixtec artisans, made about the time the Spaniards arrived. The remarkable stone masks found in central Mexico have become the trademarks of Classic Teotihuacán culture, even though they are rarely found *in situ* — as is usually true of the stone-carved examples from Guerrero. Actually, some of these prehistoric specimens may not have been masks; it is perhaps more accurate to term them “face panels,” for use on wooden or clay effigies.

Religion is paramount in the masking concept, and these objects can be regarded as a step beyond the mortal, providing a link whereby man can remove himself from his earthly confinement. In some cultures, all masks are sacred; in others, this depends upon the specific circumstances. But in all groups, masks furnish the spiritual or supernatural essence that permits the wearer to identify in whole or in part with the being whose mask he wears, allowing him to take on some of the qualities of that personage. Even clown masks reflect this religious overtone. It is this physical aura of “removal from everyday life” that gives masks much of their fascination. Often the wearer takes on a mystical quality and becomes in a sense the supernatural being his mask represents; while he wears the mask, he is no longer a mortal, and he may perform in a variety of ways, enjoying a privileged position freed from censure or restriction.

It must be realized that these masks are rarely used alone; all involve the wearing of costumes and accessories. While we have little evidence of prehistoric ceremonial dress, aside from a few replicas in clay or in painted form, it is certain that the ancient people exercised the same kind of great theatrical pageantry that is seen today. Anyone who has witnessed an Indian masked ritual is well aware of the colorful drama which is such a vital part of such performances.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Mexican masking is the superimposition of European practice upon native custom. Certainly the Spaniards made every effort to use this parallel as an aid to conversion to Christianity. One can readily identify many of the Catholic concepts in Santiago, Judas, and Christ, as well as secular individuals such as Cortez, Maximilian, and the Spaniard himself. Yet, withal, one still readily finds native concepts: animals such as the Jaguar, Owl, and Monkey; or deities such as Earth Gods, Water Beings, and Sky Deities. The degree to which this parallel is realized by the wearer is perhaps less significant than the astonishing survival of ancient customs that have been changed only slightly, and are to be found in varying strength throughout the many tribes of America.

— Frederick J. Dockstader

ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS ON THE NORTH COAST OF CANADA

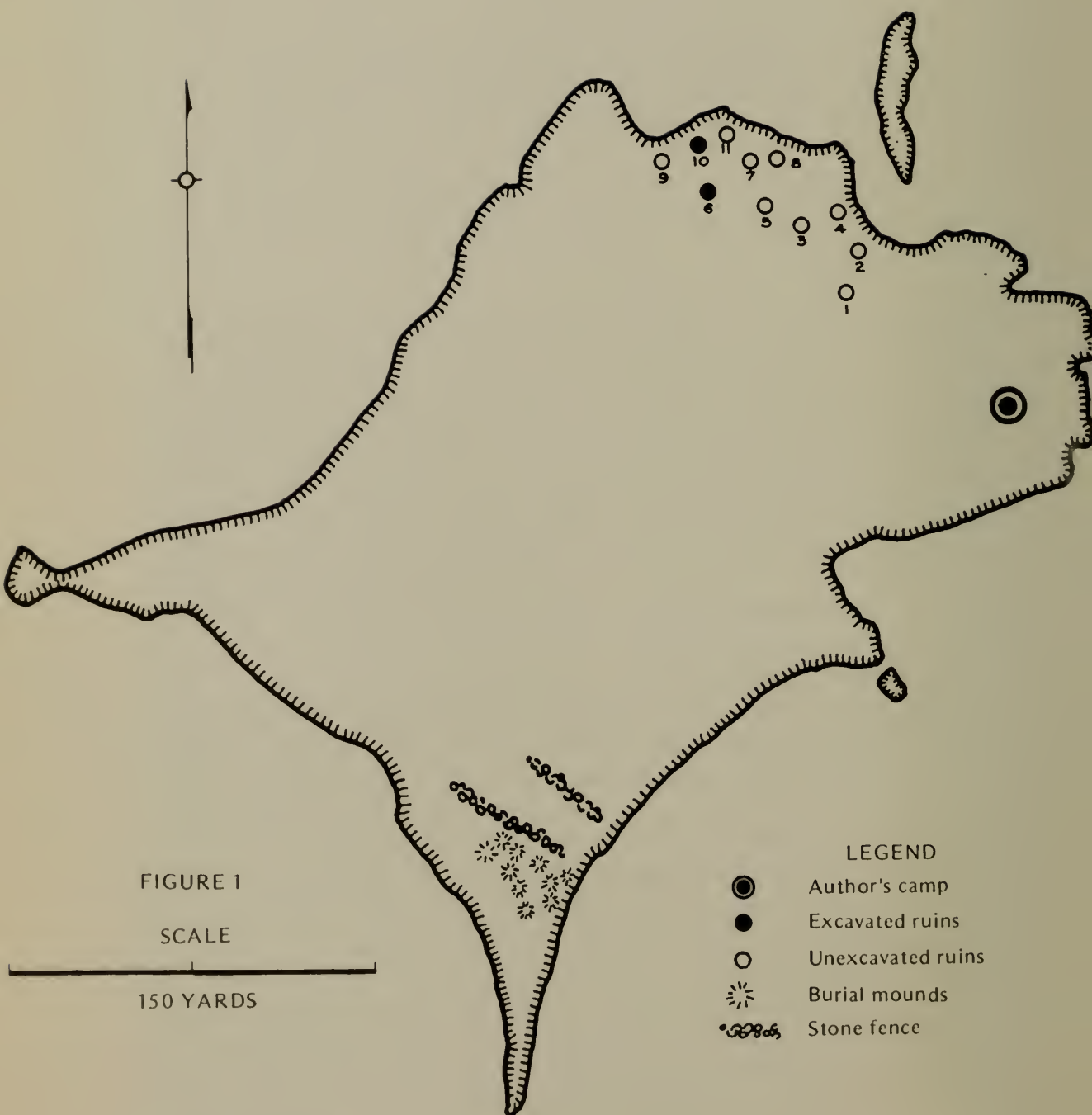
Harold Noice

When this article was deposited with the Museum around 1925, the author's archeological findings extended the known limit of Eskimo pottery remains approximately 400 miles eastward along the north coast of Canada. Although subsequent research may have outdated some of Noice's findings, we are including the article here, essentially unedited, in order to present it for the reference use of scholars and other interested readers. This is in line with our continuing effort to get more of the manuscripts from the Museum Archives into print.

The largest of the three islands [1] lying abreast of Pierce Point was at one time the home of a fairly numerous population. Its geographical situation makes it exceptionally desirable for whaling, as well as for sealing and polar bear hunting; it is also close enough to the mainland for hunting caribou and brown bear and for fishing in the large, well-stocked lakes in the rear of Prince Point. It must be said, however, that I never knew of caribou being habitually hunted from a sealing village, no matter how favorable the location. The island, though not exceeding 1100 feet long, contains the ruins of eleven dwellings of the wood and earth type, similar to those found to the west. These ruins are all apparently of the same age and are of the same general type.

The house ruins are found at the northern end of the island; at the opposite end are eleven burial mounds, corresponding in number to the house ruins. These graves are separated from the other part of the island by two parallel rows of heaped-up small stones which form a low fence extending across the base of the little peninsula on which the graves are situated. The graves consist of shallow trenches scooped out of the gravel beach. The remains of their human occupants were covered with short logs or sticks of driftwood, surmounted with large flat stones. All the bodies had disappeared, probably through the ravages of polar bears, which at times are very numerous in this vicinity. Only two human skulls and the lower jaw of a third were present in the graves. Part of an old sled runner was found; this belonged to the western type of sled. No other specimens were discovered near the graves; but I have since learned that Capt. Alexander Allen had visited this island previously and had found and taken away numerous mortuary objects.

As one walks over the surface of the ruins, there is little to indicate their presence. Were it not for the decayed stumps of the uprights and an occasional erect whalebone protruding above the surface, one would be



Above: The author's map of the three islands near Pierce Point, showing site of excavated ruins. *Opposite:* House ruins at Pierce Point and Point Agiak, respectively, are of a similar type. Outer line of each drawing indicates sod walls of house; inner line, the inside floor plan. The drawings on these pages are by Louis Schellbach.

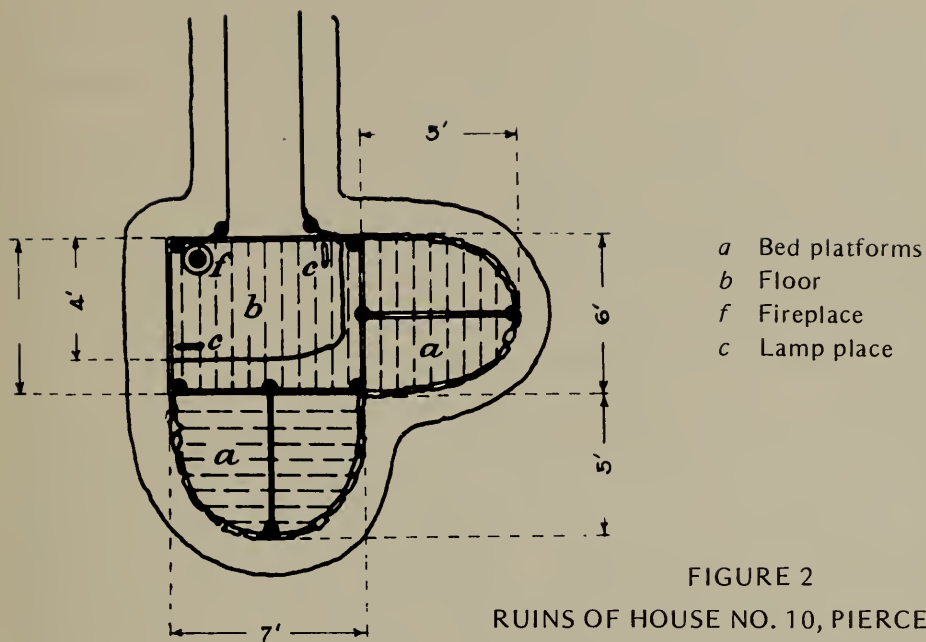


FIGURE 2
 RUINS OF HOUSE NO. 10, PIERCE POINT

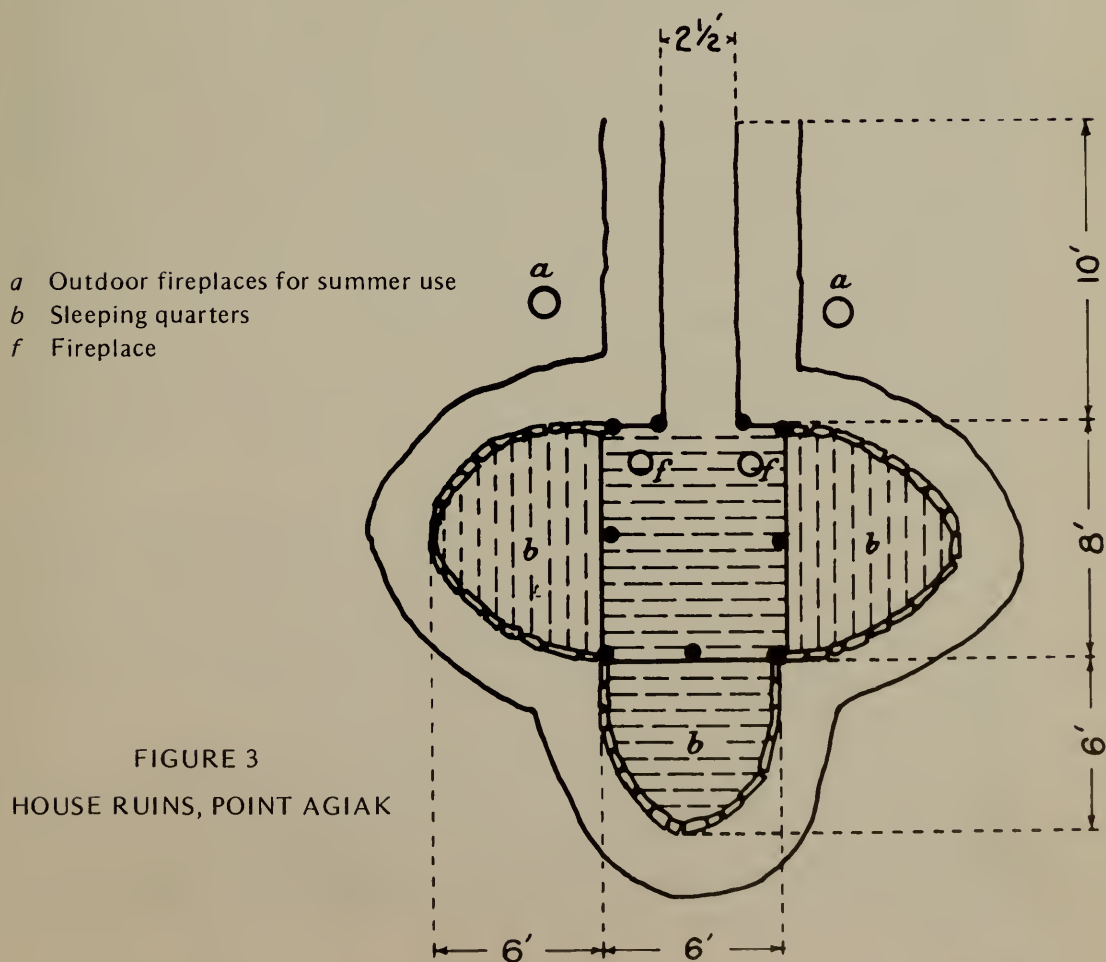


FIGURE 3
 HOUSE RUINS, POINT AGIAK

apt to pass the ruins by without suspecting their existence. Some of them are superficially characterized by a very slight elevation of the ground following the contour of the walls of the houses, with a slight, craterlike central depression where the roof had caved in.

It is difficult to determine the age of Arctic ruins, because of the very slow process of decay of anything embedded in frozen earth. I found pieces of wood and sealskins embedded in the mass of frozen debris resulting from a collapsed roof, which, if judged solely by their appearance, might not have been more than a year old. Perhaps the best indication of the age of Arctic ruins is the amount of leveling due to the action of wind, rain, frost, etc.

The doorways of several of the ruined houses lying nearest the seashore face northward toward the sea. Their kitchen middens also face the sea and extend down the slight declivity leading to it. These refuse heaps are from 10 to 40 feet long and about 10 feet wide. Their depth at the base, nearest the houses, is about three feet and tapers to nothing at the opposite end of the mound. The objects found in excavating one of the mounds are all of the same general type and appear to be of about the same age; that is, those found at the bottom and intermediate levels of the midden do not differ in type or appearance from those occurring near the surface. The sherds of pottery found in the midden are identical in kind to those gathered by Mr. Stefansson at Langdon Bay and now in the American Museum of Natural History; the other artifacts consist of implements of bone and stone. The stone knives are of special interest, for they are of the same types as those of metal now used by the western and eastern Eskimo. A large quantity of oil, solidified to the consistency and appearance of coal, was found mixed with earth and ashes. When put into the fire, it burned with fierce flame and emitted clouds of black, sticky smoke. Whaling must have been an important industry to the former occupants.

The houses themselves had been constructed of turf, wood, stones, and skins. The walls were of turf, built up layer upon layer against the uprights of wood or whalebones. The roofs were composed of poles laid crosswise from the tops of the uprights; on these poles, skins were stretched, and the whole was covered with a layer of turf, and in some houses, with large flat stones covered with turf.

The interior arrangement of the houses was much the same as in the dwellings of the present time. A bed platform, the level of which was about eighteen inches above the main floor, extended across the rear half of the house. In the larger dwellings the sleeping quarters were in alcoves opening into the central square; in such cases the cooking was done in

fireplaces flanking the door. On each side of some of the houses, little alcoves were given over to the cooking. The floors of the dwellings were covered with large, flat stones, nicely fitted together. The houses were lighted with small stone lamps. Comparatively few objects were found in the ruins of the houses themselves, as the former occupants had probably taken everything of value with them when they moved.

Of the specimens found, a small fragment of a grass net is of special significance, as its finding extends the previously known limit of nets 120 miles eastward from Baillie Island. Another interesting specimen is a fragment of a large stone pot, three-quarters of an inch thick. This vessel had a diameter of about eighteen inches, was circular in form, and was apparently made in imitation of pottery. Another object was a stone adz, the place for the handle of which indicates that it was used like the modern ax, that is, the handle being parallel with the blade, unlike the common Eskimo type of adz. A number of slate *ulus*, or women's knives, all of ordinary Eskimo types, were found; likewise several arrow- and harpoon-heads of slate. Fire was kindled by striking two lumps of iron pyrites together. Bones of the whale, bear, seal, and caribou were found in great quantities.

On the mainland abreast of Pierce Point are traces of numerous summer campsites and meat caches, indicating that the early occupants, like the present-day Eskimo, spent a considerable portion of their time inland, hunting caribou and fishing in the lakes and creeks.

Eastward from Pierce Point, scattered along the coast at intervals of a few miles and extending as far east as longitude 107° west, are house ruins of a type similar to the others; hence they require no special description. The easternmost ruins excavated yielded examples of pottery, etc., of the same general types as those found farther westward. These ruins are situated at Point Agiak, Coronation Gulf, about 80 miles east of Coppermine River.

Other important archeological discoveries in the Coronation Gulf country were made at Bernard Harbor by Mr. Phillips, manager of the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post there; at Cape Krusenstern by Mr. A. Anderson; in southwestern Victoria Island by Capt. Joseph Bernard, and at Lady Franklin Point, Victoria Island, by the author. I also have accurate Eskimo information as to the location of another large village of a similar type on the coast of Melville Sound, due south of Kent Peninsula.

To summarize: First, judging by the great number of these ruins scattered throughout the country, it seems likely that the former inhabitants of this region were at least as numerous as those of the present time; second, that the strategic position of the now-ruined houses, the

presence of whaling implements, and the large quantity of oil about them, all indicate that the early occupants were whalers and that their culture differed very little from that of their western congeners.

Prior to 1912, the easternmost known limit of pottery among the Eskimo was Point Barrow, as recorded by Murdoch. Stefansson's researches during the years 1908-1912 extended the known pottery area eastward 600 or 700 miles to Cape Parry, where he found it buried deeply in the most ancient ruins, indicating that pottery had been used by the Eskimo for centuries, and perhaps by the earliest Eskimo who occupied that area. In making excavations at various sites I have found pottery fragments as far east as the above-mentioned Point Agiak, hence the known pottery limit is extended some 400 miles farther eastward than Stefansson's observations showed. Like Stefansson, I found the pottery deep in the ruins. The implements associated with the pottery are unquestionably of Eskimo type. Again, prior to 1912, houses of earth and wood had not been reported from the western coast of Canada farther east than Pierce Point. In his journeys along the coast, Stefansson found ruined houses of earth and wood as far east as Crocker River. Since 1912, however, Captain Bernard and others have discovered additional ruins along the coast east of Pierce Point and in various parts of the coast of Coronation Gulf. Lastly, during the years 1917-1921 I found ruins of earth and wood houses of the type used in Alaska and on Mackenzie River at intervals along the north coast of western Canada and on the shores of Coronation Gulf as far east as Kent Peninsula.

Thus we find houses of wood and earth as far as longitude 107° west, or about 600 miles west of Hudson Bay waters. It seems likely, therefore, that future investigation will reveal a continuation of this chain of ancient dwellings, most if not all the way to the Atlantic and Hudson Bay.

As the opinion herein expressed seems to differ from that of some other investigators, I desire to record the belief, based on my studies in Coronation Gulf, that the present Copper Eskimo, who have neither pottery nor wooden houses, are in the main at least descendants of the earlier inhabitants who used pottery and lived in houses of wood. My view is that the present culture, characterized in part by stone pots instead of pottery, and snow houses instead of wooden dwellings, has been gradually developed in this locality partly because the previous culture was never so well suited to the local conditions as the present, and partly because the local conditions have changed somewhat. One important feature of the change has been the lessening importance and the final abandonment of whaling. My studies show that whaling was formerly practiced in certain parts, at least, of the Copper Eskimo country.



KENNETH C. MILLER

1901 - 1974

The passing of Maj. Kenneth C. Miller on June 12th is announced with sorrow. He was born in New York City on November 28, 1901, and was a member of the Museum staff as Curator of Ethnology and photographer from 1935 to 1943.

Active in military life, he served from 1922 to 1928 with the 7th Regiment and was commissioned as Major. His interest in preserving military records led to a thorough inventory of the Regiment collections.

In 1926, Mr. Miller accompanied Donald Cadzow, also a staff member, to collect ethnological specimens from the Cree, Kutchin, Blackfoot, and Crow tribes. Later he joined Time, Inc., as Assistant Picture Editor, eventually leaving to join his family real estate business. He attended Harvard University, and in 1956 accepted the position of Superintendent of Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, N.Y. He carried out this responsibility until his retirement in 1971.

His experience with the Museum was always a primary interest, and he accumulated an excellent knowledge of Native American culture during that period; he was a staunch activist in the furtherance of Indian rights. Just before his death, he contributed his fine collection to the Museum. A good friend and surpassing museum professional, he will be missed by all who knew him. We extend our condolences to his widow, Dorothea.

EUGENE V. GOODWILLIE

1905 - ~~1970~~ 1974

We announce with extreme regret the death of Mr. Eugene V. Goodwillie on July 17th, 1974. A senior partner in the law firm of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle, he had served from September 1961 to February 1970 as a Trustee of the Museum, and for part of that period as Secretary of the Board. He was a deeply respected friend, whose counsel was highly valued. He is survived by his widow, Janet, and three children, to whom we extend our most sincere condolences.



ORANGEWARE EFFIGY VESSEL

The Museum has recently received this magnificent clay effigy of the Feline God holding a human in his paws. The vessel, from the Gallinazo horizon of Peru, is a classic example of the period dating *circa* 200 B.C.-A.D. 200. This is a very little-known culture and we are proud to own a specimen that has been illustrated in many works on South American archeology. It was presented by Dr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Dockstader in memory of Dr. James A. Ford, who obtained the specimen in the Virú Valley some twenty-five years ago.

Gallinazo; Virú, Peru
MAI/HF 24/7550

circa 500-100 B.C.
7¾ x 8½ inches

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